

NATIONAL NEWS

ADVISORY NOTICE TO PARENTS

This Advisory Notice shall serve to inform you that this book has been identified by some community members as unsuitable for students. This book will also be identified in the Destiny system with this same notation.

The decision as to whether this book is suitable or unsuitable shall be the decision of the parent(s) who has the right to oversee his/her child's education consistent with state law.

AVISO PARA PADRES

Esta nota sirve para advertirles que este libro ha sido identificado por algunas personas en la comunidad, como un libro inapropiado para estudiantes. Este libro también será identificado en el Sistema Destiny con esta misma anotación.

KONSEYE PARAN

Avi Konsiltatif sa a pral sèvi pou enfòmè ou ke gen kèk manb nan kominote a ki idantifye liv sa a kòm liv ki pa apwopriye pou elèv. Yo pral idantifye liv sa a tou nan sistèm Destiny avèk menm remak la.

La decisión de si un libro es apropiado o inapropiado...

Desizyon...

Florida School District advisory notice on over 100 LGBTQ- and race-themed books. ADVISORY NOTICE IS COURTESY OF PEN AMERICA VIA TWITTER.

Over 100 LGBTQ- and Race-Themed Books in a Florida School District Labeled with Advisory Warning

Tianrui Huang, Washington Blade courtesy of the National LGBTQ Media Association

A southwest Florida district put parental "advisory notice" on over 100 books, many of which are race or LGBTQ-themed.

A great number of books in Collier County Public Schools, either digital or physical, now have warning labels with an "advisory notice to parents," according to an NBC report.

The label, tweeted by nonprofit free-speech-promoting group PEN American, states, "This Advisory Notice shall serve to inform you that this book has been identified by some community members as unsuitable for students. This book will also be identified in the Destiny system with the same notation. The decision as to whether this book is suitable or unsuitable shall be the decision of the parent(s) who has the right to oversee his/her child's education consistent with state law."

Stephana Ferrell, co-founder of the Florida Freedom to Read Project, an organization working to fight book banning, told NBC that she had a call from Elizabeth Alves, the associate superintendent of teaching and learning for Collier County Public Schools. In the call, Alves told her that the district

added the labels starting in February.

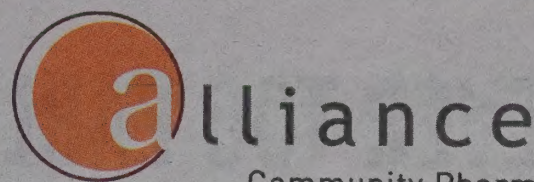
These measures, which Alves described as a "compromise," happened after the district's legal representative talked with the Florida Citizens Alliance, a conservative group which initiated a "Porn in Schools Report" project last year. The report included a list of books that "promote gender self-identification and same-sex marriage" as well as titles that include "indecent and offensive material," as the group explained.

Chad Oliver, the Collier County Public Schools spokesperson, on the other hand, offered a different story.

Oliver sent an email to NBC News saying, "Based upon advice from the General Counsel, we placed advisory notices on books about which parents and community members had expressed concern and in accordance with the recently passed Parents' Bill of Rights Law (HB 241)."

The law Oliver referred to is also colloquially known as the "Don't Say Gay" law.

According to PEN America, there are 110 books now bearing this label in total, and the list greatly overlaps with the one Florida Citizens Alliance inquired about with Collier County Public Schools.



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Tadalafil (generic for Cialis) 20mg	30	\$45
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IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO THINK ABOUT VOTING

Debra Tyler Horton,
AARP Georgia State Director

It's coming up on a busy time here in the state of Georgia. As summer comes to an end, many Georgians will be wrapped up with sending the kids back to school, hopping around some of the state's great outdoor festivals and, of course, cheering on the Dawgs. But there's one important obligation that should not get lost in the shuffle: voting.

Georgia has several consequential elections coming up this November. Voters will go to the polls to decide which candidate will lead

our state from the Governor's mansion for the next four years. They could also potentially determine, for the second consecutive election cycle, which party has control of the United States Senate. They will vote on a host of Congressional races, as well as critical statewide offices — all incredibly important contests for a variety of reasons.

In recent election cycles, LGBTQ voters' voices have grown louder and louder. With key legislation impacting the lives and livelihoods of members of this community, this emerging voting bloc has had its say in several key races. Looking back to the presidential race of 2020, 93 percent of

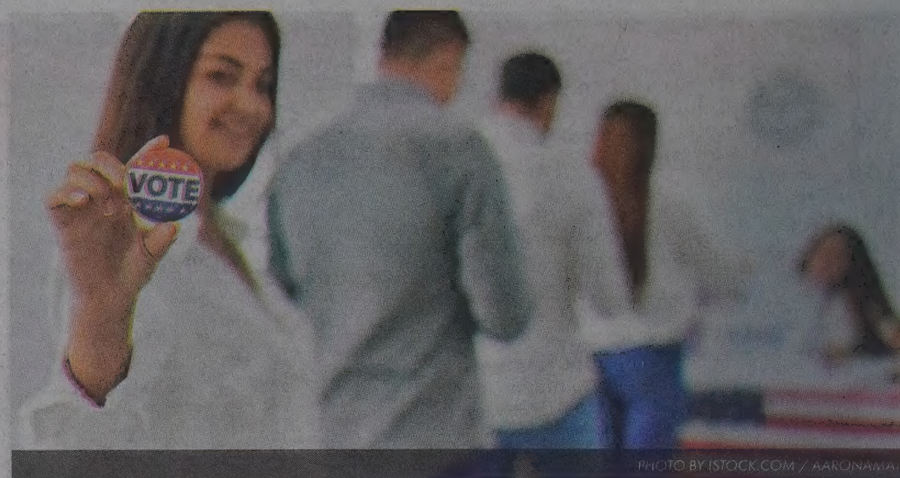


PHOTO BY ISTOCK.COM / AARONAWAI

registered LGBTQ voters turned out to vote, according to GLAAD. As a sign of just how motivated the LGBTQ community was, especially those younger LGBTQ voters, 25 percent of those LGBTQ voters were casting a ballot for the first time.

With the November 8 election day still way off in the future, does it make sense to start planning your vote now? Of course it does. Deadlines for voter registration are fast approaching. Soon enough, early voting will be underway across the state. The time

is now to begin researching candidates and issues that matter in these upcoming races. AARP, the nation's largest nonprofit organization for LGBTQ membership, is a reliable source for voting information. To find out how to register, as well as the where, when, and how of voting in the fall elections, visit aarp.org/GAvotes.

AARP is a non-partisan organization that advocates for issues but does not endorse or make political contributions to individual parties or candidates.

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FRANCK: *Le chasseur maudit*
SCHOENBERG: *Verklärte Nacht*

Inon Barnatan Plays Rachmaninov

NOV 19 | Sat. 8pm
OUTI TARKIAINEN:
Midnight Sun Variations
RACHMANINOV:
Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini
CHOPIN/Stravinsky: *Nocturne*
and *Grand Waltz*
SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 5
John Storgårds, conductor
Inon Barnatan, piano

Tom Borrow Plays Beethoven

JAN 15 | Sun. 3pm
IVES: Symphony No. 2
BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 4
Kazem Abdollahi, conductor
Tom Borrow, piano

A Sea Symphony

APR 29 | Sat. 8pm
LERA AUERBACH: *Icarus*
WAGNER: "Dawn" and "Siegfried's Rhine Journey" from *Götterdämmerung*
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *A Sea Symphony*
Nicholas Carter, conductor
Nicole Cabell, soprano
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Atlanta
Symphony
Orchestra

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

the Rose Room, a modest bar on Monroe Drive where Jackson first danced with a man. He and his friends would party on Friday and Saturday nights and again at the Sunday Tea dance. Those who could sew created outfits that they could show off at the Rose Room. "It took a lot of courage to get on that floor" Jackson reflected. "To be free, to express yourself was the excitement, not being inhibited or concerned about being ridiculed, because we were all gay."

Atlanta Committee, one of the city's few social networks for Black gay men, was a silently subversive product of its time. Jackson first heard about the Atlanta Committee from a fellow student who invited him to one their social events, and he soon became a regular member. Among its members was Dr. Otis T. Hammonds, the prominent anesthesiologist and major supporter of Black arts. The events, mostly brunches and dinner parties, were private affairs held in members' homes.



"It was a great group to be a part of," Jackson said. "They were intelligent and aware of who they were, living as best as they could." Save for a few exceptions, Jackson's peers avoided being outed. "Exposure could cause embarrassment for your family and cause you to be ridiculed, so you kept quiet," he said.

Decades before Atlanta Black Pride, the Atlanta Committee organized two signature events that drew attendees from all over the country. Their Red & White Ball was a mid-winter festive occasion that featured a Miss Black America drag coronation. "This was the '70s!" Jackson said, emphasizing the risk of such expression. The Harvest Weekend was a four-day celebration held on the week of Thanksgiving. From Wednesday through Sunday, a circuit of functions was held at various members' homes. For both events, printed invitations were mailed along with a lists of accommodations where out-of-town visitors could stay in or near Atlanta.

I could hear the swell in Jackson's voice as he described how people flocked to these Atlanta Committee gatherings, the kind that Black cishet and white LGBTQ historians strive to overlook. He assessed Atlanta Committee as "a trailblazer in exposing gay men to be empowered, to enjoy and take pride in what they are doing." Jackson looks in awe upon the achievements of Black and

queer liberation in the many years that have rolled on. As a little boy, he had to go to the back of the bus to perform as inferior for whites. As a man, he and his peers enjoyed newly won civil freedoms. Yet as queer men who faced legalized discrimination from the state and social condemnation from their own people, they remained at the back of the bus.

"I never thought we would have a Black president or that the Supreme Court would legalize gay marriage in my lifetime," he said.

I was honored to have Mr. Jackson speak with me about his growing up and coming of age in the '50s, '60s and '70s in Atlanta. We cannot fully appreciate the fruits of liberation we regularly enjoy (visible Black LGBTQIA+ advocacy, openly gay and trans Black artists, Black Pride events, shows like "Pose" and "P-Valley," and the 2021 "B-Boy Blues" film) if we remain ignorant of those whose unsung acts and undocumented lives embodied the blood, seed and soil that bore those fruits.



DEFINING MY INTERSECTIONALITY

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GAYLY DOSE

Dante Rhodes, Co-Host of The Gayly Dose

Being Black and queer (as I identify as both gay and nonbinary) has proven not to be complicated, but beautiful in the way it has led me to explore the queer-focused world I live in. Whether it's a circuit party or voicing my opinion on my podcast, The Gayly Dose, those things that define me (my race, sexuality, and gender identity) shape the way I choose to express myself. In that expression lies a spectrum of esteem that has either pushed me to a space of complete pride or caused me to cloak certain facets of my identity that may make the environment I am in feel precarious. I think the latter is what makes Pride so important.

Seeing people in spaces that Pride has provided has been pivotal in my accepting different parts

of what makes me unique as not only valid, but important. Being Black has always been that thing that has provided a setback for any advancement. Regardless of the acceptance of my gender or sexuality, and those of others like me, to exist in spaces where my Blackness is also poignant can still feel disuniting in certain ways. Just when you think you have found a new home or a group of people that identify in similar ways to you, being Black can push you to an outer ring of singularity. Even if unintentional, it has the same effect on the individual as if it were intentional. We continue to make strides in understanding people's identities and sexualities, but seem to continue to lack the understanding of what Black is and what makes Black culture unique without the ostracization.

In spaces where I have "slipped" and used

AAE (African American English), people gaze in either amazement, confusion, or disgust; whereas a non-Black counterpart may do the same thing and it be seen as normal and nothing to flinch at. Beyond that, expression of music in traditional rap, hip-hop, or R&B can be seen as uncomfortably "urban" by people in accepting spaces if explored by Black people like myself; whereas someone who isn't Black is deemed as "cultured" when exploring these forms of art. If we are going to be honest in our pursuit of Black Pride, we need to show an unfaltering support of all things related to Black culture and the Black experience.

In writing this piece about Black Pride, I didn't want it to be another article or essay about celebrating Black, queer people. I wanted it to highlight how difficult it can be to explore a queer lifestyle as a Black person.

This short piece doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of what it really feels like to live in this intersection day in and day out, but I hope it has provided a more honest view.

Dante Rhodes is a founding chief host and lifestyle expert of The Gayly Dose, an Atlanta-based podcast hosted by an all-queer cast. Premiering Season 3 this fall, the podcast is unique in its mission and follow-on format with weekly episodes known for their real conversations — featuring real live guests — about things that matter to the community and its listeners. Purposefully candid and brutally honest, the cast speaks on a range of topics, including monogamy, body issues, coming out, dating apps, gender norms, transgender rights, and growing up gay in the church. Listen at thegaylydose.com.

Queer Activists

Sound-off on Making Change

Luke Gardner

If you want the job done right, you have to do it yourself. This proverb is more fitting today than ever, given the fight for equal rights. This spirit of queer liberation can be found in the streets of Atlanta, where today's debate is about combating the racism, classism, and transphobia found in elite local communities, including the gay community.

Activists Liliana Bakharti and Tracee McDaniel discussed their experiences working to create justice for local oppressed communities. Liliana Bakharti made national headlines in 2017 when she launched her campaign for Atlanta City Council.

Since then, Bakharti, now an employee of Planned Parenthood, has continued to publicly support LGBTQ rights, access to education, reproductive healthcare, and the rights of immigrant communities.

"My work in the community has been everything I said I would do when I was running for council," she said.

In the fall of 2018, Bakharti came up with the idea of creating the "Hope For Georgia Bus" to inspire people in the community to vote for Democratic candidates and support various progressive social causes.

The "Hope For Georgia Bus" was a response to the "Deportation Bus" used by Michael Williams to criminalize undocumented immigrants in his campaign for governor a few months prior. Williams, by the way, is now in jail on charges of Insurance Fraud, according to USA Today. I guess the deportation bus did get to hold at least one criminal after all.

Bakharti has long served as a source of stability in Atlanta's marginalized communities, often times showing up to help someone in need through word-of-mouth.

"I get calls asking for help with anything



ranging from housing, assault victims, people not having food, people who can't afford gifts for Christmas," Bakharti said.

When asked about the importance of activism and political organizing, Bakharti stressed the importance of empowering people who are often ignored by the political process. "Because politics has betrayed us for so long we see involvement in it as a betrayal of our values," Bakharti said, explaining that she disagrees, believing queer and brown people deserve and require a voice in political dealings.

"Nobody knows what we need better than us," Bakharti said. When asked about how LGBTQ people can work to create positive change, Bakharti offered this.

"We are doing it through marches, through building communities, by creating our own spaces and giving a voice to those often not seen as polished enough to be in politics," she said. "We do it by being broke together and finding ways to survive together. We do it by creating our own organizations and making our voices known. We do it through a diversity of tactics."

Bakharti expressed that she attempted to run her campaign by involving groups normally ignored by the wealthy and politically powerful. "One of the things I had to do when campaigning was prove I was a viable candidate, even though I didn't have the name, money or background," she said.



She expressed that there is a divide in the queer community in Atlanta, one caused by unintentional ignorance and social privilege. "A lot of gay Atlanta is white cisgender male – the politically active community with means is typically white men," Bakharti said.

Older, affluent white gay men simply do not face the struggles of Atlanta's queer youth, who often fight through poverty, homelessness, racism, and transphobia. "Just because you're gay doesn't mean you're progressive," she said. "The reason that divide exists is because of people with privilege who don't see things from minorities [point of] view. It's always difficult to humanize yourself to people who haven't gone through what you have."

Things are changing, though. "I've been invited to organizations that are seen as white and cisgender and that are opening up spaces by giving Trans, brown people voices," Bakharti said.

While marginalized people are allowed to be exhausted and are not obligated to teach about or defend themselves to those with more privilege, it is painful work that must be done by someone.

"We must work together to work through trauma and find common ground with developers and conservatives," she said, adding that "The younger generation can take it back by showing up, not by waiting."

Alongside Bakharti is local activist, Tracee McDaniel, known for her history of championing Trans rights. She founded Transgender organization Juxtaposed Center

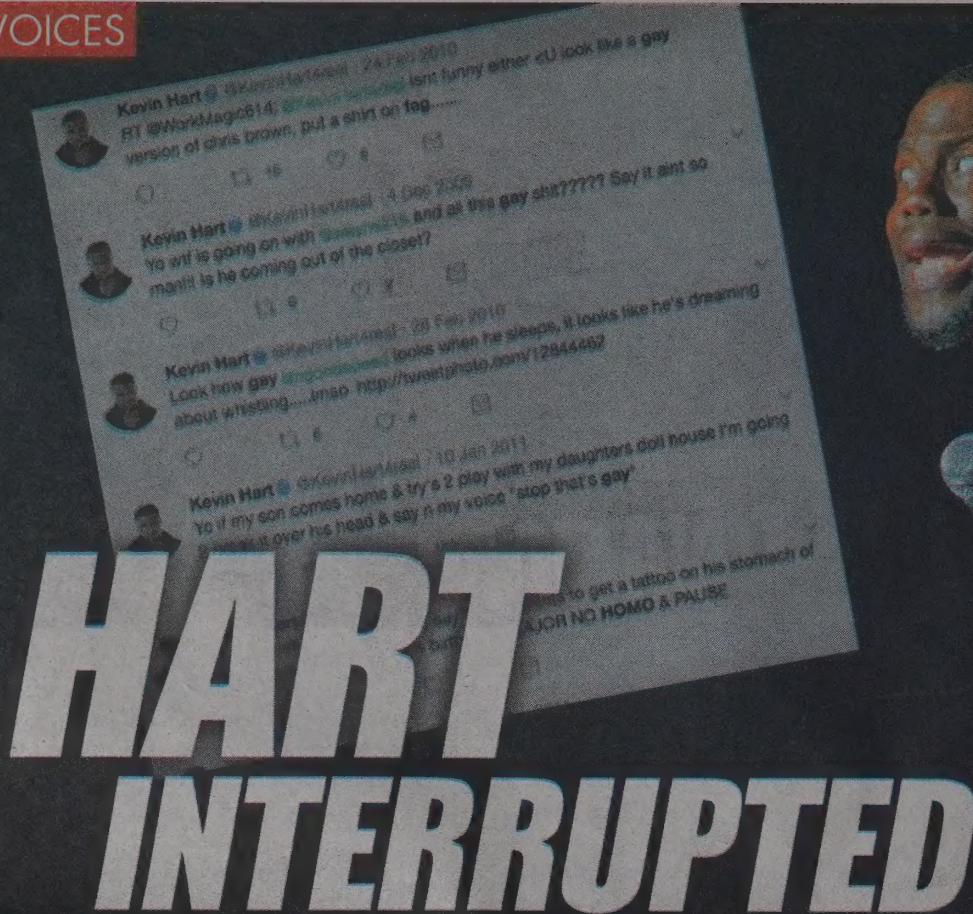
for Transformation, lobbied Congress for increased HIV/AIDS funding and protection from employment discrimination, served on Advisory Boards for the Atlanta Police Department and the Center for Civil and Human Rights, which she is still on.

Currently, McDaniel serves as a volunteer Executive Board Director for the Trans Housing Atlanta Program, which provides housing assistance to Trans and non-trans people in need. She also serves on Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms' LGBTQ Advisory Council, which advises Bottoms on issues that impact our community.

"I strongly believe that if we're not willing to show up, participate and advocate for ourselves, we can't complain when others don't," McDaniel said when asked about the importance of organizing for queer rights.

"Don't be afraid to get and stay involved. Generations before us have fought against conservative – dehumanizing values and have made it better for us to take the baton and run the next leg of the marathon. It's now up to us to do our part."

McDaniel also spoke on Atlanta's divide in queer experiences. "There's no denying that it exists," McDaniel said. "It's essential that we get involved regardless of what our socioeconomic backgrounds are. We can't afford to remain silent and passive, our very lives depend upon using our voices to ensure equity for Trans and Gender non-Conforming people. Our involvement and voices are very necessary and as important as others. Always remember, Human Rights are Trans Rights, Trans Rights are Human Rights."



HART INTERRUPTED



Craig Washington

Kevin Hart is the hottest black comedian of this era. He would have been only the fourth black person to host the Academy Awards which says a great deal about that American institution. The discovery of homophobic comments in tweets like this one, “Why does @DamienDW profile pic look like a gay billboard for AIDS,” prompted a flood of objections to the Oscar gig. When the Academy offered him an ultimatum, offer an apology or walk, Hart chose the latter.

Hart holds fast that he should not have been required to offer another apology. He claims to have evolved since his earlier days of sick AIDS fag jokes. I don’t see it. He shows more arrogant attitude than regret. What he considers as past apologies read much more like justifications. If he were so reformed, his appreciation of the injury his words inflicted would be evident. Such alleged growth would’ve brought him to a different stand. I believe he would not have hesitated to apologize again no matter how long ago his offense was made. Instead, he characterized those who objected to his hosting Oscar night as being “negative” and “angry.”

Recently he has invested much more time in framing those he offended as attackers out to destroy him while posing as the victim than apologizing. During his interview with Ellen Degeneres, the openly lesbian comic revealed that she appealed to the Academy to reinstate Hart, and joined him in branding his critics as “trolls” and “haters.” As an A-list gay, Ellen serves as the perfect gay proxy. Want to counter allegations of your bigotry? Secure the endorsement of an influential member of the group you’ve insulted.

Because he is a celebrated black man, the stakes are tangled by the interplay of race, gender, sexual orientation identities, and various forms of power he embodies. Those who are held responsible for Hart’s troubles are swiftly assigned motives and markers. As queer centered organizing is widely regarded as the domain of white gays, many assume that Hart’s critics are exercising collective white gay privilege and power.

For many black people, whether or not he made the remarks, when and if he apologized for them, and what the Academy actually proposed, doesn’t affect their perception of a

successful black man being unjustly ruined. Institutional racism is displayed in full regalia every year on Oscar night and every day throughout the film industry. Many would ask, if it were a white celebrity would the same ultimatum have been imposed?

However, the distinction between challenging discrimination and overlooking harmful acts when the accused is black should not be avoided. There is a dysfunctional knee jerk tradition of depicting those who question black patriarchy as traitors to the race capitulating to the interests of our white oppressors. Many black LGBTQ folks are not comfortable with challenging homophobia when it’s practiced by black public figures. When actor Billy Porter publicly took Hart to the task, one commenter referred to his white partner, indicting Porter’s take as white-influenced. As LGBTQ activism is read as a white enterprise, black gays who confront black homophobes are rebuked as snow queens, Oreos or just “acting white.”

I have witnessed other talented black men whom I deeply admired being held accountable for deplorable actions. As a fellow black man,

I found their achievements inspiring and would swiftly object to any discrimination or other acts of injustice targeting them. My love and respect for black men not incompatible with denouncing their actions when they do bad things. To call them out for it makes me no less black. To challenge homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny within black communities does not mean that I prioritize my gayness above my blackness.

In my assessment of the Hart debacle, I cannot forget those who struggle to survive by avoiding detection or daring to walk out in the sunlight. As my good sister, Nasheedah-Muhammad Bynes once acknowledged, “It is an act of resistance for many of us to walk out of our door and get on a MARTA train.” As one who was once young, gay, gifted and black, I once questioned where my place was in the family, in the world. It was because of the harsh words flung at me or above my head within the supposed safety of my own living room that I learned. If we are to protect another generation from soul-crushing condemnation, we must demand a greater commitment to understanding from men like Mr. Hart and the everyday brothers in our lives.

The Art of the Cruise

Patrick Colson-Price

I rushed home eagerly one night in late 2009 after picking up a new outfit from the nearest retail store. I hoped it would be a hit for a night out on the town. I didn't know who I'd meet that evening. I had to look my best. Would the bar be packed? Could I meet my soulmate tonight? What would my hookup partner be like? Too talkative in bed? Quiet enough to take in his groans and moans as we made our way through ecstasy? I think having more questions than answers upfront allowed me to create in my head, a world where there were infinite possibilities.

I think I just enjoyed cruising through the dimly light bar or club making eye contact with shadowy figures in the corners. I'd wait for a nod or smile to return a gesture. The mystery behind it all intrigued me to no end. I think it even filled my New Years celebrations with a sliver of hope. Maybe I'd find the one in 2010 or 2011, so on and so forth. I knew it was ultimately in my hands.

I checked my phone; the time was just after 10pm. Notifications on my phone were usually limited in the evenings. There were a few texts from friends discussing which bars and clubs we'd be hitting up that evening. There wasn't a Facebook app, and Instagram hadn't been created yet. Myspace was on a downward spiral, Manhunt was strictly for desktop computers, and gay apps were non-existent. Fast forward a decade, and it's likely you have every social media app plus ten new ones on your phone.

It's strange to look back on the past decade to see just how far we've evolved as a community when it comes to communication. Out of the handful of mobile apps geared towards dating/hookups, Grindr has been around the longest since 2009, and Scruff has made its

MORE INFO

■ As of 2017, Scruff had more than 12 million members worldwide in 180 countries, across six continents. The app has been translated into 14 languages including Spanish, Portuguese, German, French, Chinese and Arabic.

■ As of early 2018, Grindr has reported reaching 196 countries and has 3.6 million users online on a daily basis. It was the first gay geosocial app to launch in the iTunes app store.



way to the top of the mobile cruising world.

The ease of staying in bed and scrolling through dozens of men hundreds of feet away without having to go to a bar or club provides a layer of security. There's no fear of face-to-face rejection, and if you're not into someone else, silence can get your message across. But I can only imagine what older men feel when they look back on their days where the art of cruising superseded a profile pic or the perfect Grindr or Scruff bio. The challenges of having to formulate thoughts and conversation on a whim without the distance of a phone screen between two parties seems mind-boggling for some. There would be no room for long, awkward pauses or the chance to "block" someone who didn't fit into our cookie-cutter ideals. I'd give up my phone for a day just to experience that face-to-face interaction without technology, without a phone to even jot down a number or email address.

Even though our community was fighting the devastating AIDS epidemic in the '80s and '90s, the bond between men was tight. It came in the form of safe places, clubs, and bars where cruising strengthened our vow to living as authentically gay as possible. I



agree times have changed. There's no need to escape to a bar or club where 99.9 percent of the clientele are gay men. Acceptance from the outside is now part of our culture. It's why we've ultimately ditched those venues to meet new people for friendships or hookups. It's why an overwhelming number of younger men spend about an hour of their day on apps like Grindr. According to We Are Flint, 42 percent of Grindr users in 2018 were between the ages of 18 and 34. Scruff users tend to fall into the older age bracket as the app is geared towards more mature clientele.

In an interview with Slate.com in 2018, Fiona Anderson, the author of *Monks of the Dead River: Cruising New York's Ruined Waterfront* in the late 1970s and a lecturer of art history at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom, said the act of cruising is becoming an unknown term amongst young gay men.

"It's interesting because I've noticed that with students recently, it's kind of the first time where I've really had to explain what cruising is to them if I talk about a contemporary artist who looks at cruising in their work," she explained. "I'll give a brief description, and they'll say, 'No, I don't quite understand.' Then they would ask me, 'Where would this happen? When would this happen? Does this still go on?'"

She also pointed out that cruising was not really about finding a mate, or even having one orgasm; it was more about "engaging with other people in an open-minded erotic way." After that initial glance which Todd Verow, the producer, co-writer and co-director of the documentary, *The End*

of Cruising, says persists for more than 3.5 seconds, there's a connection, according to his interview with Slate. Whatever that connection may be; love, friendship or sex, it's really all any guy ever wants. It's the quickest way to boost our self-esteem and give us the confidence to own the rest of our night on the dance floor or on the bar stool until we start all over again the next day.

How do we get back to the seedy, mysterious performance of cruising? Can it be done with apps like Grindr and Scruff at the forefront of our social needs? It's possible but only with persistence just like any other new years resolution one might work towards in 2019. It takes about a second to remove an app from your phone. No, you don't have to delete your Grindr or Scruff but cleanse it from cluttering your social needs. Plan a night to go out to a bar, club or even dinner. While many guys pull their phones out on the dance floor, at the bar or at the dinner table to see who's closest to them, allow yourself to be surprised when making glances around the room. See a hot guy? Make eye contact and begin reading his body language, his mannerisms, his smile, and laugh. Even a dick pic won't compare to the mystery of the growing bulge in his tight jeans.

I leave you with this. Online hookup apps aren't bad. I think it's healthy to some extent when we're looking for a quick orgasm to tide us over but don't rely on it as your sole form of social communication. Cruising isn't about being perfect, it's about being human. Allow yourself to be vulnerable and open with who you are. Welcome others into discovering your life with just one glance. It'll invigorate you.



GYM GOAL-GETTER: LIFTING, LAUGHING AND FORGIVING *with Darren Floro-Bryant*

Patrick Colson-Price

His demeanor certainly doesn't match his profession, at least not what you'd expect from your typical personal trainer. Darren Floro-Bryant has learned to love what he does through humor and mishap. It might seem counter-productive especially when many of his clients are first-timers nervously looking to buckle down and get serious with their 2019 resolutions. They're looking for someone who knows what to do and how to do it efficiently. Floro-Bryant does it all but with humbleness.

"I try to give a real human approach to it ... and show clients ways that I've done things wrong and where I've gotten to now," he says. "I try to teach everyone to have a sense of humor about themselves. I teach fitness classes, and I have to demonstrate exercises all the time. I'm rushing through, and sometimes I'll trip or mess up. I have to laugh at myself."

At first glance, you'd think Floro-Bryant was this hardcore, hardass, military-style gym nazi looking to beat down and bruise even the most determined goal-getters with this "tough love" mentality. It's how many trainers in the past used to market themselves. Add that to a gym full of complicated machinery

and hundreds of other people hogging equipment, and it's no wonder people quit their resolutions before they've had a chance to break a sweat.

"The gym is very intimidating if you don't know what you're doing," says Floro-Bryant. "When you don't show up at the gym, it weighs on you. You feel guilty for not showing up. You hear about other people who are still going to the gym, and it deters you even more."

He's lived the struggle. More than three decades ago before he jumped on the fitness bandwagon, Floro-Bryant was like most newcomers. At the age of 21, he weighed close to 230lbs. He wanted to lose weight and live a healthier life.

"It took some time to change my eating habits, my daily habits," he said. "My mindset was to be more disciplined."

Floro-Bryant even strived to be on the cover of Men's Health, a coveted title that any fitness junkie would be honored to hold. However, his body wouldn't allow it, so he re-organized his goals once again. Some he'd accomplish, others he'd never even touch. It was a continuous cycle of disappointment

and guilt that ultimately drove him to tweak small parts of his fitness regiment. He uses his past experiences to show clients he used to be where they are today.

"There's a time when I didn't go to an actual gym. I had a Bowflex in my basement. I'd get up every morning or on the weekends and start out on the treadmill. I'd say, 'Nobody's going to do this for you.'"

He started with a large goal, broke it down into smaller, more achievable goals, and tackled those on a strict timeline. For example, if one of his clients wanted to lose 50 pounds, he'd cut that into five 10 pound goals. Each time a goal was achieved, he'd put them on a different path to reach the next one, so on and so forth. That way, the ultimate 50-pound goal seems more attainable over time rather than trying to accomplish it in one or two sessions.

And with that ultimate goal, he says clients were likely to have more setbacks and failures because of the added pressure to lose so much in so little time. He began to emphasize that it's ok to fall down, it's ok to make mistakes. From missing a day in the gym to indulging in tasty treats, he says it's all part of the journey.

"If you're out with your friends and everyone goes out for a birthday, and there are cupcakes, you might have one," says Floro-Bryant. "If you feel like you need to abandon your whole workout goal now because you had that cupcake and then feel like you need to have another one ... just accept that you had the one cupcake and start fresh again the next day."

"Have a sense of forgiveness," says Floro-Bryant. And also practice accountability. "Keep a calendar. Have a visual paper calendar to write down the number of times you went to the gym," he says. Add an accountability partner (A friend or family member who supports your fitness journey) into the mix, someone who can help you take measurements and before and after photos. And if you choose to hire a personal trainer, find someone who can take your goal and transform it into a healthy lifestyle.

At the end of every workout and every accomplishment, he always takes it back to his clients.

"It's them that does the work. Even when clients thank me for getting them to a certain goal, I turn it around and say you did the work," says Floro-Bryant. "I may have shown you and helped you stay safe with it, but you still did the work."